



SYRIA, APRIL 2026

Explosive Ordnance Casualties in Syria

08 December 2024 - 03 April 2026

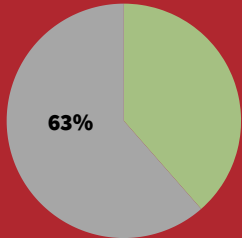
1.137 INCIDENTS **2.050 CASUALTIES**

746 were killed including:

482 men **45 women** **219 children**

1.304 were injured including:

730 men **47 women** **527 children**



Over 63% of the 1.113 total incidents occurred on agricultural or grazing land.

Numbers based on Syria Mine Action AoR

The Three Governorates Most Affected by EO Contamination

- DEIR EZ-ZOR
- ALEPPO
- IDLIB



DRC team during an NTS visit. Douma, DRC 2025

From Contamination to Recovery: The Critical Role of Humanitarian Mine Action in Syria.

This year, the International Day of Mine Awareness on April 4th serves as a reminder of the need to invest in Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) and the importance of clearing land of explosive threats, enabling communities to live safely while investing in their resources. For Syria, this is especially critical given the country’s ongoing transition since the political shift in December 2024. As efforts intensify to address the needs of affected communities, focusing on HMA is essential to support both the communities’ development and resilience in a rapidly changing environment.

This briefing note highlights a critical yet often overlooked reality in Syria: Explosive Ordnance (EO) contamination is not just a protection concern, but also a major barrier to recovery and economic stability. Across the country, land, infrastructure, and public spaces continue to be affected by EO contamination, preventing communities from cultivating their lands, opening businesses, and sending their children safely to school. Without sustained and integrated HMA, investments in agriculture, infrastructure, and early recovery cannot translate into meaningful or durable outcomes. HMA is a prerequisite, enabling safe access to essential services, restoring livelihoods, and supporting a safe, voluntary, and dignified return. It is also an investment in economic growth and stability, contributing to increased food security and livelihood opportunities while fostering safe, sustainable, and resilient communities.

While the immediate effects of the crisis are still visible, the long-term danger of EO contamination remains underestimated and hidden. Without addressing EO contamination, investments in the country’s recovery process remain vulnerable, communities remain at risk, and the country’s long-term stability continues to face significant challenges.

“ Explosive ordnance contamination is not just a protection concern, but also a major barrier to recovery and economic stability. ”

It is estimated that between December 8th, 2024, and April 3rd, 2026, at least 1.137 EO-related incidents were recorded, resulting in 2.050 casualties, including 746 deaths (482 men, 45 women, 219 children) and 1.304 injuries (730 men, 47 women, 527 children). Most incidents, 63%, occurred in agricultural and grazing areas, highlighting risks to Syrians involved in farming and livestock. According to The Carter Center Data and Analysis Team (2022), it is estimated that between 100,000 and 300,000 explosive munitions have failed to detonate. This figure does not include data from non-technical survey (NTS) and clearance operations, nor does it account for contamination from anti-personnel and anti-tank mines affecting farmland, roads, schools, and residential areas across Syria. These risks are compounded by limited contamination mapping and access to risk information, leaving IDPs, returnees, and host communities exposed when accessing their land or rehabilitating housing and infrastructure.



DRC Syria operations managers during EOD training, Daraya, DRC 2026

According to the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment, EO contamination poses serious hazards to all community members, including children and adults. It undermines security, restricts access to grazing land, farmland, water sources, rebuilding sites, and sanitation facilities, and disrupts livelihoods. The concentration of incidents in agricultural areas (63%) highlights a direct link between EO contamination and disrupted livelihoods, limiting food production and income generation. Risks are heightened by high-risk behaviors such as self-clearance, scrap collection, farming or grazing in dangerous areas, and the use of EO remnants for shelter, driven by economic pressures, livelihood gaps, and limited awareness. These challenges are compounded by gaps in EO risk education and the need for expanded NTS, community liaison, and clearance efforts.

As Syria moves toward recovery following the political transition, HMA remains essential. It enables safe access to resources, supports the return of displaced populations, and supports sustainable development. Without a coordinated, cross-sector approach, communities affected by EO contamination cannot safely access land, restore livelihoods, or benefit from essential services. A unified response that addresses immediate protection risks and creates conditions for safe return, inclusive recovery, durable solutions, and resilience is crucial. Central to this effort are Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) rights, which guide clearance efforts and require strong coordination and meaningful community engagement to ensure context-specific, inclusive, and sustainable outcomes. Additionally, when HLP issues are addressed, the recovery process becomes more holistic and reduces risks of social tensions and conflict over land and property, contributing to a more stable environment.

“ As Syria moves forward, addressing explosive ordnance contamination must be recognized as a prerequisite for safe, sustainable, and cost-effective recovery. ”

Coordinated HMA lays the foundation for restoring community stability and promoting inclusive recovery by allocating resources, engaging relevant stakeholders, and coordinating across sectors to address both immediate risks and long-term needs. As Syria moves forward, addressing EO contamination must be recognized as a prerequisite for safe, sustainable, and cost-effective recovery. Investing in HMA is not an additional burden. It is a necessary step to increase people’s safety and to protect and maximize the impact of all other humanitarian and recovery efforts. Without it, communities remain exposed to EO threats, recovery remains partial, and investments fail to deliver their intended outcomes. On this International Mine Awareness Day, there is a clear opportunity for donors to shift from short-term responses to predictable, integrated, and multi-year support, ensuring that recovery in Syria is not only possible, but safe, inclusive, and sustainable.

Recommendations

- **Prioritize mine action as a prerequisite for recovery investments**

Mine action should be systematically integrated into recovery and early recovery funding streams. Donors should ensure that livelihoods, agriculture, infrastructure, and shelter programmes are paired with survey and clearance to avoid unsafe or ineffective investments.

- **Strengthen national ownership and institutional capacity.**

Sustained investment is needed to strengthen the capacity of Syrians and Syrian institutions, including Syria National Mine Action Centre (SNMAC), and ensure a long-term nationally-led mine action strategy. Donors should support long-term capacity development, technical secondments, and system-building, ensuring nationally led, sustainable humanitarian mine action coordination and oversight.

- **Invest in multi-year, predictable mine action funding**

Short-term funding cycles limit the effectiveness and efficiency of mine action and increase cost per square meter due to constant remobilization. Donors should provide multi-year, flexible funding to enable sustained survey, clearance, and risk education, ensuring continuity between activities and maximizing impact on recovery and self-reliance.

- **Integrate HLP considerations into mine action programming**

Clearance priorities should be aligned with HLP rights. Donors should support programming that ensures safe, rights-based return and access to land, reducing conflict risks and supporting durable solutions.

- **Support area-based, integrated programming approaches**

EO contamination requires coordinated responses across sectors. Donors should prioritize area-based programming that links mine action with livelihoods, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), shelter, and protection to enable safe access to land, services, and markets.

- **Recognize mine action as a cost-efficiency multiplier**

Investing in mine action increases the effectiveness of broader aid. Donors should treat mine action as a cross-cutting enabler that protects and multiplies investments in recovery, infrastructure, and livelihoods.

DRC Syria Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding (HDP) 2025-2026 at a glance:

DRC's approach to HMA in Syria focuses on strengthening local systems, promoting community ownership, and delivering integrated, conflict-sensitive programming aligned with national recovery priorities. We work closely with national actors, supporting their institutional and technical capacities through joint assessments and tailored learning programs aligned with the International Mine Action Standards. Through a multi-sectoral model including Protection, Economic Recovery & Resilience, WASH, and Shelter & Infrastructure, DRC enhances the safety, security, and resilience of affected communities. In response to widespread contamination, DRC is scaling up its HMA program. Building on Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) implemented since 2013, we have expanded into NTS and clearance. As an accredited mine clearance operator, DRC delivers integrated HMA while supporting the establishment and capacity development of the SNMAC and reinforcing national systems to sustain long-term resilience and stability. By enabling safe access to land and resources, our work directly contributes to recovery, livelihoods, and long-term stability.



EOD Training Activity, Daraya, DRC 2026

In August 2025, following the completion of EORE and NTS training, DRC delivered EO risk-awareness sessions to communities exposed to those threats. NTS activities commenced in November 2025. Since then, two EORE/NTS teams have reached more than 2,500 beneficiaries, including over 1,200 children. EOD Level 2 training concluded in 2026 with 20 staff members participating, including five SNMAC personnel. All teams are now fully operational and deployed to contaminated areas in Rural Damascus and Dar'a.

DRC added value:

DRC is positioned to deliver integrated mine action and recovery programming in Syria as a fully accredited clearance operator with strong multi-sectoral expertise. Through its nexus approach, DRC goes beyond risk reduction by systematically combining EO clearance in populated, high-impact areas with complementary recovery interventions. DRC's integrated approach enables the safe restoration of livelihoods for farmers and small businesses, the rehabilitation of shelter and critical infrastructure, and the provision of psychosocial support tailored to local contexts and needs, maximizing humanitarian impact, accelerating recovery, and strengthening community resilience. With extensive experience in both emergency and long-term efforts, DRC offers a holistic range of services, from clearance and risk education to survivor support, awareness-raising, and fundraising, making it an effective partner for local authorities, particularly in building capacities at multiple levels. By collaborating closely with authorities, DRC strengthens national mine action capacity through training, support of SNMAC operations, and the development of integrated frameworks that ensure sustainable, efficient, and coordinated clearance efforts with other sectors.



DRC and SNMAC Teams During the EOD Graduation Ceremony. Kiswah, DRC 2026

CONTACT INFORMATION

JAKUB WALENDA, HEAD OF HDP. EMAIL: JAKUB.WALENDA@DRC.NGO. TEL: +963 965 770 231

LISA JEAN, COUNTRY DIRECTOR. EMAIL: LISA.JEAN@DRC.NGO. TEL: +963 953 666 640